Pope Francis' Prayer at the Way of the Cross

O Christ! Abandoned and betrayed even by your own and sold for next to nothing.

O Christ! Judged by sinners, handed over by those in Authority.

O Christ! Suffering in the flesh, crowned with thorns and clothed in purple. O Christ! Mocked and mercilessly nailed to the Cross.

O Christ! Rent by the lance that pierced your heart.

O Christ! Dead and buried, you who are the God of life and of existence.

O Christ! Our only Savior, we turn to you this year too with eyes lowered in shame and hearts filled with hope:

Ashamed of all the scenes of devastation, destruction and drowning that have become a normal part of our lives;

Ashamed of the innocent blood shed daily of women, children, migrants and people persecuted because of the color of their skin or their ethnic and social diversity or because of their faith in You;

Ashamed of the too many times that, like Judas and Peter, we have sold you and betrayed you and left you alone to die for our sins, fleeing like cowards from our responsibilities;

Ashamed of our silence before injustices; for our reticence in giving and greed in grabbing and conquering; for our high pitched defense of our interests and timid defense of others'; for our alacrity in following the path of evil and apathy when it comes to following the path of good;

Ashamed of all the times that we Bishops, priests, consecrated men and women have been a cause of scandal and wound to your body, the Church; for having forgotten our first love, our initial enthusiasm and total availability, letting our hearts and our consecration rust.

So much shame Lord, but our hearts also feel nostalgia for the confident hope that you will not treat us according to our merits but solely according to the abundance of Your mercy; that our betrayal does not diminish the immensity of your love; your maternal and paternal heart does not forget us because of the hardness of our own;

The certain hope that our names are etched on your heart and that we are set in the pupil of your eyes;

The hope that your Cross may transform our hardened hearts into hearts of flesh that are able to dream, to forgive and to love; that it may transform this dark night of your Cross into the brilliant dawn of your Resurrection;

The hope that your faithfulness is not based on our own;

The hope that the hosts of men and women who are faithful to your Cross may continue to abide in fidelity, just as yeast gives flavor and as light reveals new horizons in the body of our wounded humanity;

The hope that your Church will seek to be the voice that cries in the wilderness of humanity in order to prepare the way for your triumphant return, when you will come to judge the living and the dead;

The hope that good will be victorious despite its apparent defeat!

O Lord Jesus! Son of God, innocent victim of our ransom, before your royal banner, before the mystery of your death and glory, before your [executioner's] scaffold, we kneel in shame and hope and we ask that you bathe us in the blood and water that flowed from your lacerated heart; to forgive our sins and our faults;

We ask you to remember our brethren crushed by violence, indifference and war;

We ask you to break the chains that keep us imprisoned in our selfishness, our willful blindness and, in the vanity of our worldly calculations.

O Christ! We ask you to teach us never to be ashamed of your Cross, not to exploit it but to honor and worship it, because with it You have shown us the horror of our sins, the greatness of your love, the injustice of our decisions and the power of

your mercy. Amen.